

## STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, INNOVATION, GENDER RELATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE CONTROL OF PLASTICS AND STYROFOAM® CONTAINERS

The Government of Saint Lucia is committed to improving the health and environment of the nation. As I indicated in my announcement in August 2018, and as studies have shown, food service containers made from Polystyrene and Expanded Polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam®, along with Plastics have continued to negatively affect the health of citizens and the cleanliness of our environment.

In this regard, the Department of Sustainable Development in partnership with other key agencies such as the Saint Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority, the Department of Economic Development, Ministry of Commerce, the Department of Finance and the Customs and Excise Department have over the last months worked towards the development of a suitable strategy to eliminate single use plastics, polystyrene and expanded polystyrene from our market and environment.

To further demonstrate the government's commitment to safeguarding the health and environment of our island, I wish to announce in keeping with a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, that Saint Lucia will be implementing a ban on the importation of Styrofoam® and selected Plastic food service containers as of June 1, 2019. Therefore, any Styrofoam and the selected plastic food service containers landed after May 31, 2019 will not be released by the Customs and Excise Department. These items will be phased out over a one year period commencing June 1, 2019 until May 31, 2020. This approach will allow all stakeholders a chance to exhaust their current stock of Styrofoam® and the selected plastic food service containers and to source environmentally friendly alternatives. The importer will bear the associated costs for disposal of any seized items.

In the first instance, the Government will be phasing out the importation of:

1. All Styrofoam® food service containers including cups, plates, and hinged take-away containers and
2. Other selected Plastic cups, plates and containers.

Thereafter, a ban on the use of these products will become effective immediately on June 1, 2020.

As a country, we can only successfully achieve our goals if we work together. I therefore invite the private sector, non-government organizations, schools, the media, faith-based organizations and residents to give full support as we endeavor to preserve our fragile environment for ourselves and future generations. I encourage us to make choices that will be safer for our environment. The Department of Sustainable Development along with the other agencies, with whom we have collaborated thus far, will continue efforts to educate and sensitize the general public on the options available to them.

**End.**